

The Right Thing The Wrong Way, Part 1 - Romans 10:1-7 – September 23rd, 2012

- Today's teaching will be part one of a new series titled; "The Right Thing The Wrong Way," as we begin our study of Romans chapter ten.
- Paul will now rise from the pages of our Bibles, and show us how it is that we all have the propensity to do the right thing in the wrong way.
- We see the first way in the first two verses, where the Apostle Paul, true to form, pulls no punches, and just speaks the truth from his heart.

1. Zeal without Knowledge (Verses 1-2)

- v1 Once again, the Apostle Paul shows how much of a heart's desire he has for Israel to be saved so much so, it's his heart's prayer as well.
- v2 He then goes on to say that he can testify about them that they are zealous for God, the problem is their zeal is not based on knowledge.
- This is what I really like about Paul, even though he speaks truth to them, he is still complimenting of them, because of his desire for them.

- By the way, if there were ever a man who knew a thing or two about zeal without knowledge, it would have to be none other than Paul.
- By that I mean, one Saul of Tarsus, before he was known as Paul the Apostle, persecuted Christians in his zeal, not based on knowledge.
- In his epistle to the Philippians chapter three verse six, Paul of himself concerning his zeal tells of how he indeed persecuted the church.

- To have zeal without knowledge is textbook when it comes to doing the right thing the wrong way; perhaps better said with the wrong heart.
- The truth of the matter is, you can have all the zeal in the world, but if you lack the knowledge and the understanding, you'll be misguided.
- The problem is that for many Christians, we can have a zeal for the Lord, but have no knowledge when it comes to the Word of the Lord.

- By way of example, I'll pose a question; would you let a zealous surgeon perform surgery on you knowing he didn't possess the knowledge?
- How about an airline pilot, would you board a plane knowing that while he was very zealous, he didn't possess the knowledge to go with it?
- The bottom line is, having zeal without knowledge in the life of a believer can prove to be catastrophic for them, and those close to them.

2. Morality without Righteousness (Verse 3)

- v3 Paul says since they didn't know the righteousness that comes from God they sought to establish their own, and didn't submit to God's.
- It's important to note, as some translations render it, that they were ignorant of God's righteousness, which is why they sought their own.
- In other words, in their ignorance of God's righteousness, they sought to establish a standard of righteousness and morality of their own.

- This kind of righteousness is what the Bible calls "self-righteousness," and the problem with self-righteousness is that it isn't good enough.
- In trying to live moral and upright lives in the energy of our own flesh and seeking to obtain our own righteousness, we will always fall short.
- Furthermore the puny little self-righteousness we end up somehow obtaining, at the end of the day, is not only unacceptable, it's filthy rags.

Isaiah 64:6 NKJV But we are all like an unclean *thing*, And all our righteousnesses *are* like filthy rags; We all fade as a leaf, And our iniquities, like the wind, Have taken us away.

- Like zeal without knowledge, so too is morality without righteousness. We seek both to our own peril, and it's birthed out of our own pride.
- The common denominator with both is, they require the component of self-deception, by that I mean, we end up believing our own lies.
- More specifically, I'm deceived and have believed, I can somehow be zealous enough and or moral enough in order to be good enough.

- Here's what this looks like, and plays out like, in our Christian experience, Christian husbands see themselves as better than their wives.
- Conversely, wives look down on their less than spiritual husbands. Also, pious pastors look down on their less than spiritual congregants.
- Or, even worse yet, some congregants will look down with disdain on the pastors fancying themselves as being more zealous or even moral.

- This will manifest itself in a hyper critical attitude of condescending criticism's whether it's between pulpit and pew, or husband and wife.
- I'd venture to say that this type of Christian experience both in the church and in the home is fast becoming not the exception but the norm.
- Simply put, there are way too many zealots, moralists, and as we'll see next, legalists both in the body of Christ, and the marriage in Christ.

3. Law without Faith (Verses 4-7)

- v4 Paul expounds further saying how that Christ is the end of the law in order that there may be righteousness for everyone who believes.
- v5 He goes on to say how Moses describes the righteousness that's by the law this way; "The man who does these things will live by them."
- v6-7 He says righteousness that's by faith says: "Do not say in your heart 'Who will ascend into heaven, or Who will descend into the deep'"

- What Paul is saying here is that one doesn't need to scale great heights, nor plumb great depths in order to achieve perfection or righteousness.
- As one said it, "Instead of having to go to great lengths to *achieve* righteousness by the law, we can immediately *receive* righteousness by faith."
- Perhaps better said, this righteousness by faith comes vis-à-vis a childlike simplicity, not a complex system of philosophy, or even deep theology.

- It's imperative that we understand why it is that the Jews would do this, namely, as it relates to zeal, morality and certainly the law of God.
- I'm of the belief that the reason is two-fold in the sense that the Jews didn't like the Gentiles, nor did they like the Messiah that God chose.
- The straw that broke the camels back was God choosing to make righteousness obtainable for the Gentiles, the same way for the Jews.

- The reason I say this is because the Jews we're OK with God's choice here-to-fore because it meant they would be God's chosen people.
- This is evidenced by what Paul wrote in the previous chapter in that God chose Isaac over Ishmael Jacob over Esau and Israel over Egypt.
- However, when God then chooses to make salvation available to the Gentiles in the same way that it is for the Jews they reject that choice.

- It's at this juncture that I'll bring it to a close with the application for us in our lives. In other words how does what the Jews did apply to me?
- The short answer is, we like them, reject God's choices, God's ways and God's Word, and in so doing opt for the right thing the wrong way.
- This results in a brand of Christianity riddled with an ignorant zeal, self-righteous morality, and a faithless legalism, that will be full of pride.